2: Imperial Gazetteer G-3 (1889-95) 1909 AV1 Kashmir AV1

731

rice crop is generally protected by irrigation. The greatest distress is due to the fall of rain or snow while the rice and maize are ready for harvest. The famine of 1832 was caused by early snow, and was aggravated by the floods which followed. In 1877 rain fell almost continuously for three months, and the old system of collecting revenue in kind prevented cultivators from gathering their crops when opportunity served. Food-grain was not to be had; and when imports were made at the expense of the State, the corrupt officials were the chief persons to profit. It is improbable that such distress can be experienced again, owing to the construction of a cart-road, and the change in the method of collecting revenue.

Political relations. 648

The State is in direct relationship with the Government of India, who is represented by an officer of the Political department, styled the Resident. His head-quarters are at Srīnagar. At Gilgit a Political Agent exercises some degree of supervision over the Wazīr Wazārat, and is directly responsible to the Government of India for the administration of the outlying petty States. A British officer is stationed at Leh to assist in the supervision of Central Asian trade.

Administration. 643

On his accession to the *guddi* in 1885, the present Mahārājā was entrusted with the administration of the State, aided by two ministers: but in 1887, at his own request, he was relieved from all part in the administration, which was then placed, subject to the control of the Resident, in the hands of a Council consisting of His Highness's brother and two selected officials from the British service. In 1891 the Mahārājā assumed the presidentship of the Council, while his brother, Rājā Sir Amar Singh, K.C.S.I., became vice-president. The Council was abolished in 1905, and its powers were conferred on the chief himself. Under the new arrangements the Mahārājā administers the State. There are three ministers, in charge of the revenue, judicial, and home departments; but business requiring the orders of the Mahārājā is laid before him by the chief minister, Rājā Sir Amar Singh. For some time past the departments of finance, revenue settlement, forests, and public works have been in charge of British officers, whose services have been temporarily placed at the disposal of the Darbār.

645

The four chief executive officers are: the governor or Hākim-i-Ala of Jammu, the governor of Kashmīr (each aided by a general assistant), the Wazīr Wazārat of Gilgit, and the Wazīr Wazārat of Ladākh.

635

In Jammu there are five districts, each in charge of a Wazīr Wazārat, an official whose average salary is Rs. 250 a month.

Another step then taken was the removal of restrictions that existed on the freedom of the press and the platform. The Press laws in the State were brought in line with those of British India. To-day there are in existence in the State over 60 newspapers and periodicals.

After the enquiry into grievances had been completed, a reforms conference with Mr. Glancy as President was held to give effect to His Highness' desire to associate his people with the administration of the State.[1] The result of the recommendations made by the conference and the Franchise Commission under the chairmanship of the late Sir Barjor Dalal, Kt., I. C. S. (Retired), was the establishment in 1934 of the Jammu and Kashmir Praja Sabha. A very low set of franchise qualifications was adopted, and the right of vote was at once given to about 6 per cent. of the population, including a number of women.

The Constitution then introduced permitted the asking of questions, moving of resolutions, introduction of Bills as also discussion of the State Budget. The Sabha consisted of 75 members, over 60 of whom were non-officials, 33 of them being elected. This Constitution remained in force until 1939, when His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur was pleased of his own accord, to sanction further constitutional advance by a proclamation issued on the 11th of February 1939.

The main features of the new constitutional advance were that :—

(a) the elected element in a house of 75 members was raised from 33 to 40 ;

(b) the Sabha was given the right of electing a Deputy President from amongst its non-official members ;

(c) provision was made for the appointment of non-official members as Under Secretaries to work with His Highness' Ministers and ensure closer association between the Government on the one side and the members of the Praja Sabha and the constituencies on the other ;

(d) the Sabha was given the right to vote, except with regard to a few non-votable items, on the demands made by Government for Budget appropriations ; and

(e) the Sabha was given the right of passing all legislation pertaining to taxes, as distinguished from fees and penalties.

[1] [i.e. after an outbreak of communal troubles in 1931 -- Analyst]

642 The Constitution Act subsequently promulgated embodies the provisions of the proclamation of the 11th February, 1939. Its note-worthy features may be summarised as follows :—

646 (1) Subject to His Highness' inherent legislative, executive and judicial powers in relation to the State and his Government, the Council of Ministers, comprising the Prime Minister and such other Ministers of State as His Highness may appoint, is invested with the power of superintendence, direction and control of Civil Administration and Government of the State ;

(2) provision is made for the appointment of an Advocate General ;

646 (3) the legislature of the State is to consist of His Highness and the Praja Sabha, which comprises 75 members, excluding the President who is appointed by His Highness. The members of the Council are *ex-officio* members of the Praja Sabha and of the remaining members, 40 are elected and the rest nominated. Of the nominated members, not more than 8 (excluding members of the Council) are officials. The Praja Sabha has power to make laws for the whole of the State or any part thereof and for all the subjects of His Highness, wherever they may be.

652 Provision is made for laying before the Praja Sabha in
646 respect of every financial year, a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the State for the year, and so much of the Budget estimate as relates to expenditure not charged to the revenues of the State is to be submitted to the Praja Sabha in the form of demands for grants. The Praja Sabha has the power to assent to or to refuse to assent to any demand or to assent to it subject to a reduction of the amount. The Council, however, has the power to restore the grant refused or reduced by the Praja Sabha, provided it considers that the expenditure is necessary for the carrying on of any department or for the discharge of the Council's responsibility for administration. Besides, His Highness may, in cases of emergency, authorize such expenditure as may in his opinion be necessary for the safety or tranquillity of the State or any part
642 thereof, or for the carrying on of any department.

646 The principal matters reserved from the purview of
[643] the Praja Sabha are :—

(a) His Highness or any member of His Highness' family or the management of His Highness' household;